

FORUM

Internal Party Journal of the S.P.G.B.

No. 10

JULY 1953

SIXPENCE

MUST WE PROSECUTE THE CLASS STRUGGLE?

A spectre is haunting the April FORUM—the ghost of Utopianism. A contribution entitled “People of the World—Unite” rattles the dry bones of Robert Owen before us. In an article advocating “revolutionary” changes in our D. of P., we are offered, as a substitute for “Das Kapital”, the “New View of Society”. The same standpoint as that which Marx criticised in this third and tenth “Theses on Feuerbach” is propounded as being more up-to-date than the “legacies from other organisations and past conditions” which allegedly constitute the present socialist case. There is, seemingly, no necessity for talk (or action) about class-struggle on the political field. All that is needed is to become class-conscious, which “simply means seeing that there are two classes in Society whose interests are opposed, and that so long as Capitalism lasts there will be class struggle”. Having adopted this SPECTATOR’S VIEW of class-struggle, one (whether capitalist or worker) may “tower” above Society and do sterling duty as the great “educator” himself.

Revolutionary socialists, on the other hand, forsake the grandstand of the ivory tower for the political arena in order to end class struggle by the successful prosecution of the last class struggle. Realising that men are born into society as a going concern, it does not surprise them that men are either capitalists or workers. In the plexus of social relationships which constitute capitalism a man has no choice—he must belong to either the capitalist or the working class. The revolutionary, therefore, does not condemn the individual capitalist for being one of the privileged minority. Rather does he condemn the social relationships which determine that a man must belong either to the exploited many or the favoured few. Thus the aim of the revolutionary is not to abolish capitalists—but capitalist society; not “the ending of antagonisms”—but the revolutionising of social relationships.

The basic capitalist relationships which must be abolished is the relationship of employer to employee—the class relationship. So long as this class relationship endures, so long will capitalism run its course, and, so long will the

capitalist class, as the ruling class, be committed “to preserve their system”. The capitalist class, as a class, cannot abdicate. Individual members may relinquish their capitalist-status, during, say a crisis, but only to become members of the working class.

The socialist claim “that the emancipation of the working class must be the work of the working class itself” does not imply that “the S.P.G.B. should address its propaganda to the “working class alone, as coming from the working class alone” in the sense that individual capitalists cannot understand Socialism. Socialists recognise, along with Marx (see the “German Ideology”, etc.) that individual capitalists can become Socialists. But in so doing, these individual capitalists do not step outside the class struggle but merely change

capitalist became a Socialist, capitalism would not therefore disappear. But why not? Surely only because of the fact that the class relationship still remains. The early Utopian Socialists held the view that Socialism could be established by appealing to the ruling class to use their power for that purpose. Robert Owen spent his life and fortune in that direction. Our clause 5 registers the fact that it is futile to appeal to the ruling class. Not because the ruling class consist of hard-faced business men, but because the INITIATIVE rests with the working class. So long as the working class do not feel compelled to abolish capitalism, so long will capitalism endure.

Where S.R.P. errs is in his subjectivist view of class struggle. He sees in the class struggle only the “antagonism” of individual capitalist against individual worker, whereas the revolutionary regards the class struggle as the EXPRESSION of the antagonisms “inherent in the life conditions and social circumstances of individuals” (Intro. to Critique of Pol. Econ.). For the revolutionary, it is not a question of what this or that individual worker may regard as his aim—or what the working class as a whole may regard as its aim. What we are concerned with is that which the working class IS.

On the political field, it is true “that the S.P.G.B. is equivalent to the working class party”, since in that field the rest of the working class, as individuals, take their place in the class struggle on the side of the capitalist class. Nevertheless, since it is in class struggle that individuals attain class-consciousness, a socialist party must prosecute the class struggle. It is thus, and only thus, that a situation can develop wherein “the uprising class can free itself from its old trammels and become capable of founding a new Society (“German Ideology”). It is only in this movement of class struggle that human beings can discard the “outlook of single individuals in civil society” and attain “the standpoint of the new (which) is human society or socialised humanity”. (Thesis on Feuerbach.)

R. RUSSELL
(Reply overleaf)

A MEETING

to discuss this subject

Lewisham Branch Room

July 13th

8 p.m.

sides. Nor does our clause 5 tie us to the view that “capitalists . . . are powerless to help—even if they have socialist understanding, they cannot act on it in the way that workers can”. Indeed, our fifth clause means the opposite. It means that individual capitalists who have socialist understanding MUST act on it in the same way as workers with socialist understanding. That is, they must assist in the prosecution of the class struggle ON THE SIDE OF THE WORKING CLASS, the aim of the struggle being to abolish the proletarian status.

Since S.R.P. recognises that “capitalism continues not against the will of the working class, but because it is just as much the workers’ choice as the capitalists’”, he will no doubt readily concede that if every individual

OUR ATTITUDE TO CLASSES

Emancipation of All

Comrades Richmond, Lock, and Russell have between them opposed most of the ideas that I put forward in "People of the World—Unite". In their enthusiasm, however, they have unfortunately read into my remarks much that I neither said nor meant, and have themselves made statements which are not entirely satisfactory. In the hope of clarifying matters, I shall take up some of their points.

RICHMOND

According to Richmond, men's "ideas and interests, aims and attitudes, are those of their class, and in this sense a man is a product of his class and is identified with it." As a generalisation, this is a fair statement—but we must not over-simplify the position by making each individual fit the generalisation.

Let us, rather, say that within class society it is classes that set the pattern of man's social environment. It is classes that, by assigning him a specific role in the division of labour, determine the manner in which he will deal with that environment. A man is not so much a product of his class as a product of class society. And the empirical justification for this view is that an individual CAN, despite all the obstacles, change his class and become identified with another.

Class consciousness is not contemplation but knowledge. Richmond implies that I said it was "knowledge of class struggle which resolves all antagonisms"—seeking to give my remarks a class-collaborationist flavour. What I said was, "it is knowledge that there is class struggle that ends it". The prosecution of the class struggle is, on the proletarian side, fighting for higher wages, T.U. activity, etc., of which a necessary element may not be knowledge of the nature of Capitalism. You need not be a socialist to participate in the class struggle—but you must have knowledge of it and of how to end it if you are to be a socialist.

Richmond writes of the obstacles to socialist understanding. "These obstacles, difficult as they are for a worker to circumvent, prove almost insurmountable to the capitalist." It is more accurate to say that very few capitalists have surmounted them. But then very few workers have either. Most of the reasons for preserving Capitalism that Richmond says capitalists give, are also given by workers. A capitalist never boasts of "200 years of bourgeois rule"—he may dismiss Socialism, and talk of war being due to human nature, but such views are just as sincerely and tenaciously held by workers as by capitalists. As for the "class conditioned snobbishness and superior-

ity", don't forget that inverted snobbishness and inferiority are also barriers to socialist understanding.

Richmond then quotes Engels: "The dictum that Communism is not a mere party doctrine of the working class, but a theory compassing the emancipation of society at large, including the capitalist class, from its present narrow conditions . . . is true enough in the abstract, but is absolutely useless and sometimes worse in practice." If a dictum is true theoretically, then how can it be useless and worse (i.e. false) in practice? I can only hope that Engels meant that it was open to misunderstanding, and therefore better avoided.

"True in the abstract" can only mean "true ultimately"—Communism WILL involve the emancipation of the whole of mankind without distinction (of race or sex or any other type). My case is that it is possible and desirable, despite all the difficulties, to explain this to everyone. The remainder of the quotation merely amounts to saying that if no capitalists are socialists, then the socialist movement will have to be carried on entirely by workers—obviously.

* * *

On the question of my proposed amendment of my fifth principle, Richmond states that "must be the work of the working class itself" emphasises majority action. I confess to having overlooked that without this clause there is no specific commitment to majority action; though even this seems inadequate, since to me Socialism is something that will be brought about by virtually the whole of society, and not merely a majority. I am never happy about who the minority opposing it will be and why they will do so.

Class consciousness is not just the reflection of working class conditions. In saying that other elements (e.g. the antagonistic relations to property) enter into it, I am not saying that it is just a theory which is to be drilled into people's heads. In my article I explicitly stated that Socialism is in the interest of the working class. Nevertheless, it is not enough to say that the S.P.G.B. expresses class interests unless you also say that those interests are to abolish classes.

If my position is "evangelistic and non-partisan", then Marx seems to have been tarred with the same brush. Richmond quotes him as saying that the revolution "is carried through by the class which no longer counts as a class in society, is not recognised as a class and is in itself the expression of the dis-

solution of all classes". I interpreted this to mean "it is not workers acting as the working class who achieve Socialism. Workers acting as socialists achieve it".

I do not understand the relevance of the last quotation from "Selected Essays". True, the attitude of some individuals does not alter the class struggle. "Mr. Heinzen, on the other hand, sees all classes melt away before the solemn idea of 'Humanity'". From Richmond's concluding remarks ("the changes suggested by S.R.P. were advanced and ANSWERED over 100 years ago") it seems that he believes that Heinzen and I are putting the same case. You have only to read the essay quoted to see that this is not so. For one thing, Heinzen denied the division of present society into economic classes.

A further word on 'humanity', since many members appear to be troubled about it. It is true that Marx and Engels did polemicise against their opponents' use of phrases like 'true love of humanity'. Not, however, because they themselves cared little for humanity, but because their concern was too real to tolerate hypocrisy and lip-service. In advocating scientific socialism, they were up against all kinds of counter programmes, e.g., those of Feuerbach, Proudhon, Dühring, etc. It was not the idea of humanist equalitarianism they were attacking, but because, without political organisation, it can only be reformist and reactionary.

LOCK

An "anonymous capitalist" in the Party? Lock gets such obvious pleasure out of swearing at capitalists that I feel quite guilty about confessing to being a worker. Though, to use his phrase, I don't give a damn for being a member of the working class.

"There can be no question of soothing syrup for the capitalist class to gain their support." Why bring in soothing syrup, which means 'making special concessions'? Nowhere did I suggest that we should make special efforts to gain the support of the capitalist class. If, however, directing our propaganda to all is called soothing syrup, then the absence of such syrup can only soothe those who hold that no capitalist can be a socialist. Lock ruins his whole case by granting the exception of Engels—or did someone give him soothing syrup?

"All capitalists are class conscious", asserts Lock. He takes class consciousness to mean that "I belong to the capitalist (or working)

class". But you must see the difficulties this leads to. Engels was a member of the capitalist class, yet his class consciousness was obviously more than "I belong to the capitalist class". There are many workers who are conscious that they belong to the working class, but they are not socialists. That is why I insist that the term 'class consciousness' (which should not be used apart from 'socialist') denotes an UNDERSTANDING of Capitalism, which includes a desire for Socialism.

I am sorry that Lock finds my explanation of the basic attraction of Socialism reads like a Sunday-School message. It doesn't particularly matter why Lock or I think we want Socialism. The attraction is basic because it is something that nothing except Socialism can bring, and because it is part of the object that all socialists share. There is nothing except Socialism that will enable us to live without class antagonisms and in social harmony. It is true that Socialism is the only way in which working class poverty can be ended. But it is not true that it is the only way in which Lock or I can end our present poverty position. If Lock, through no fault of his own, had enough money to relieve him from the necessity of working for his living, would he give up being a socialist because he would be on the "right end" of the antagonism?

My amendments to the D. of P. were not "in order to make our propaganda unselective". The D. of P. is the basis of membership, and should be an accurate expression of what holds us together. At present, I think it would be generally agreed that the basis of membership is knowledge. As far as I know, no Party rule excludes members of the capitalist class from the Party, which does not question the way in which members get their living. That is the principle at stake.

RUSSELL

I did not say that "legacies from other organisations and past conditions" constitute the present socialist case. It is just that "the dead past weighs like an Alp upon the brain of the living". Nor is there any apparent connection between my standpoint and that which Marx criticised in his 3rd and 10th Theses on Feuerbach. Here are the theses:

III

The materialistic doctrine concerning the changing of circumstances and education forgets that circumstances are changed by men and that the educator himself must be educated. This doctrine has therefore to divide society into two parts, one of which is superior to society.

The coincidence of the changing of circumstances and of human activity or self-changing can only be comprehended and

rationally understood as revolutionary practice.

X

The standpoint of the old type of materialism is civil society, the standpoint of the new materialism is human society or social humanity.

It is most unfair of Russell to imply that I think there is "no necessity for talk (or action) about class struggle on the political field". The Party's view, to which I subscribe, is quite clear on this. We are out to abolish the "antagonism of interests, manifesting itself as a class struggle". Call it "successful prosecution of the last class struggle" if you must—so long as you mean by that the ending of classes.

I do not deny that Russell can claim that the Party supports HIS view, since on p.14 of Principles and Policy we read that class struggle "is a struggle on the one side to maintain and on the other side to abolish a social system". However, I take it that in 1944 we are not so much concerned with the authority behind statements as with their correspondence with facts.

The class struggle and the socialist movements are NOT identical nor is the latter the mere political expression of the former. The class struggle is fought out in the arena of Capitalism. The working class, by definition, can never successfully prosecute the class struggle—they can only end it. What they prosecute successfully is the struggle for Socialism, but this is a struggle against ignorance, not against capitalists.

Why does Russell insist "not the ending of antagonisms—but the revolutionising of social relationships"? Surely the position is that the social relationships will be revolutionised from those of mutually antagonistic owner and non-owner to those where such ownership and consequent antagonisms will not exist.

He takes "committed to preserve their system" to mean that the capitalist class cannot abdicate. Neither can the working class. A capitalist is no more bound to support Capitalism than a worker, and there are no logical grounds for treating the capitalist's opposition to Socialism different from the worker's.

Russell says that individual capitalists with socialist understanding "must assist in the prosecution of the class struggle ON THE SIDE OF THE WORKING CLASS" and that outside the S.P.G.B. "the rest of the working class as individuals take their place in the class struggle on the side of the capitalist class". A little thought will show how absurd this is. A capitalist, as capitalist, can never change sides. If he happens to be a socialist and he employs people, then there is still an antagonism of interests. Similarly, non-socialist workers don't fight the class struggle on the political field on the side of the capitalist class.

The simple position is that ALL workers are on one side of the economic class struggle and ALL capitalists on the other. As regards the ending (political) of class struggle, I repeat that membership of either class is irrelevant.

I suggested modifying clause 5 of the D. of P. because I agree with Russell that it does register the fact that it is futile to appeal to (members of) the ruling class. Russell brings in the red herring of the Utopian socialist "appealing to the ruling class to use their power", but it is obvious that I didn't mean that. How can we justify the assertion that it is futile to appeal to (i.e. hopeless to expect) understanding of capitalists when we know some have been socialists?

There is, of course, no basis for Russell's assertion that I see in class struggle only the antagonism of individual capitalist and individual worker. And why refuse to discuss what the working class may regard as its aim? Surely any discussion about what the working class IS should not over look the fact that they are people—and people do have aims.

* * *

The clash of opinion on this subject has not been without value, and I summarise my conclusions as follows:

1. The class struggle is the inevitable product of class society, and is fought over division of wealth, condition of employment, etc., within that society.
2. As a result of dissatisfaction with class society, and in particular with the failure of the subject class successfully to prosecute the class struggle, there arises a movement to abolish it and to establish in its place classless society.
3. This socialist movement is something more than a form of class struggle, since its aims include the ending of class struggle.
4. In the very process of ending this struggle, the socialist gives expression to the highest aim of the subject class, which is an equalitarian society.
5. No individual within class-divided society is incapable of participating on equal terms with all others in the socialist movement, since Socialism constitutes the emancipation of the whole of society from its present narrow conditions.

S.R.P.

Correspondence and articles should be sent to FORUM, S.P.G.B., 52, Clapham High St., London, S.W.4. Subscriptions 12 months, 7/6d, 6 months 3/9d. Cheques and P.O.'s should be made payable to:- E. Lake, S.P.G.B.

THE ACCEPTANCE OF SOCIALIST IDEAS

In dealing with Turner's article on selectivity (March FORUM), Hayden denies that Socialism is a way of living. He tells us that "it is a way of thinking about the problems of society, especially poverty, and advocating as a solution the transformation of capitalist society to a communal one". A definition of Socialism, this is deficient in two ways. It does not make it clear that Socialism is a system of society (in its human aspect, a way of living); and its use of such terms as "thinking" and "advocating" makes it into an intellectual rather than a practical proposition. Plenty of people outside the socialist movement could claim to be thinking about the problems of society and advocating a communal one (e.g. Anarchists).

Hayden did not complete the sentence: "Socialism is a way of living . . .". Turner added "living harmoniously with all people". As Turner states, there are no groups of people, past or present, who, living under a property regime, have not been antagonistic to each other.

Here, in my opinion, is the very kingpin of the argument—absence of harmonious relationships. This absence is not confined to an antagonism between capitalists and workers alone. There are groups of workers antagonistic to other groups of workers; groups of capitalists antagonistic to other groups of capitalists.

If a system of society can be established to abolish these antagonisms, to abolish devastating wars—in the modern world, wars are no respectors of social status—then what is left to make Capitalism more attractive to the capitalists except "excessive luxury"? It is assumed that they will be reluctant, under any circumstances, to give this up. Yet what else is excessive luxury but an attempt to keep up

a competitive standard? It is considered "the thing" to lunch at Claridges, to go to Ascot, to drink numerous bottles of champagne until the early hours of the morning. But the people who pass their lives in this way are generally no happier nor more integrated human beings than the rest of the population.

It is extremely doubtful whether their access to material wealth and their ability to command the services of others, makes up for their virtual exclusion from productive activity. Thus we read (*People*, 5.4.53) of ex-King Farouk who, according to a member of his entourage, was "bored stiff" in Rome, and so left for a holiday on the French Riviera. Farouk's man added: "He didn't know what to do with himself. Time was heavy on his hands". The incidence of melancholia and suicide is highest among those who have never worked. And judging by my observations of "social gatherings" over the past twenty years or more, I should say that boredom is much more in evidence than happiness.

Why cannot capitalists be convinced that "all will gain"? After all, members of the capitalist class have contributed in no small way to the growth of ideas of a future harmonious society. Maybe some were "utopian"; nevertheless they must have had some measure of understanding of the basis of property relationships and the consequent antagonism of interests.

ENCOURAGING PREJUDICE

No. 3 of our D. of P. uses the words "this antagonism can be abolished" and refers to democratic control by the WHOLE PEOPLE. Hayden claims that "the Party's attitude is that we would wish to obtain our objective by peaceful means if we may, but by force if we must." Those who attended the E.C. meetings when the complaint made against Turner on

the question of violence was dealt with will know that this is very far from being the case. For every statement in the S.S. on the possible use of violence to curb a recalcitrant minority, there is at least another explaining that violence can have no part in the establishment of Socialism. This is an issue which must be thrashed out—however it is not my main concern in this article. I am concerned with socialist ideas, and particularly with the prejudices of some comrades about what prevents others from accepting them.

Socialism, or the ideas of a world fit for human beings to live in, CAN be accepted by those who are wealthy. Prejudice will arise on the question of wealth, of course—but then in our propaganda work we meet with such prejudice in people from all walks of life.

"They are welcome to listen to use, but we are not likely to get a majority of them even at the eleventh hour", states Hayden. The point is that people will not feel welcome to listen to us if our propaganda is framed to exclude certain groups from the possibility of understanding our ideas. Even the groups to which we appeal may, by our very selectivity, fail to grasp the universality of Socialism.

A description of the world we live in to-day, and our solution to the problems that beset both capitalist capitalists and workers, does NOT mean an appeal to the capitalists for a "change of heart". A change of ideas in all who support Capitalism is what we are after. In no way does this invalidate our conception of the class struggle or what it implies. With the fruitlessness of the ideas of co-partnership, profit sharing, incentive bonuses, etc., it is to our advantage to point out that we have a real solution—"a way of living harmoniously".

G. HILBINGER.

MASS ATTACK PROPAGANDA TECHNIQUE

I would like to endorse the views of Comrade McGregor in his article "What Does Selectivity Mean?" in the May FORUM. One of the reasons for the depressing results after 50 years of both indoor and outdoor propaganda is "small scale technique" and, as he has clearly shown, our propaganda calls for a radical revision.

May one hope in the near future to see an announcement in the S.S. along the following lines? The S.P.G.B. has decided to make an experiment in propaganda in the form of a 3-6 months' all-out attack in a given area,

where one or more big outdoor meetings will be held at least once a week. The nucleus of the audience will be a minimum of fifty comrades organised on the rota principle and pledged to be present at the start of the meeting to give it a strong send-off. In addition, one indoor meeting will be held each week, covering in turn every available hall in the area and backed up with posters and loud-speaker equipment.

Whenever possible there will be announcements in the local press, supported by the purchase of space, containing a write-up of

the subject matter that is being dealt with at the meetings, both indoor and outdoor. Also a challenge to debate to all political opponents or anyone who would like to try his hand at opposition. Should the press refuse to sell us space for this purpose, leaflets will be printed and freely distributed, mention being made that publicity in the local press was refused. In addition to this, the S.S. will be canvassed from door to door in force. Further, a few comrades will be stationed at well-chosen busy spots all over the area every day, selling the S.S. and other literature.

I would like to wager we would make more progress, in both increased membership and permanent literature sales, than we have done in the past fifty years. Practically everybody in the area would know of the existence of the Socialist Party, and what it stands for, long before the campaign was over. What a furore it would produce! I visualise the air around these parts veritably electrified with interest. The S.P.G.B. would be the "talk of the town", and how infectious to the surrounding areas!

Go where you will, stop a hundred people, ask them their views on the soundness of the Party case, and what will be the answer in nearly every instance? "Never heard of that Party." And this after fifty years! Such a depressing state of affairs could not happen at the conclusion of our high pressure drive in the area chosen for this experiment. We can do it—what are we waiting for? The experience gained in the effort would be a useful

guide for our next attack in other areas. None of us knows for sure what the total results will be. We can, however, be certain that they will be in the direction we all desire.

Such a plan of campaign would be bound to arouse intense interest in quite a number of ways, such as in sympathisers, all and sundry interested in politics, and encouragement to all our comrades wherever they may be—especially the speakers. The progress reports in the S.S. would be looked forward to and read, both near and far, with much eagerness.

There must be a great number of "waverers" who try to justify their reluctance to take the plunge on the ground that the smallness of the membership, after fifty years of plodding, is conclusive proof that there is no hope of seeing Socialism realised in their lifetime. They, with others, would be keenly watching progress.

Such a campaign, as suggested, would most

certainly put us on the map for all time in the area chosen. The press would find it very difficult to avoid giving the drive some further publicity, however small. I consider £150, spent in this way, would give much better value than as a free gift of a forfeited deposit for a few weeks' concentrated effort when everybody is talking and comparatively few listening. Further, in my opinion, no constituency should be contested until a campaign of this description has preceded it, months beforehand.

I suggest that comrades could do much worse than carefully to re-read and digest what McGregor wrote on this matter in the May FORUM, especially the latter section. It also be interesting to have the views of other comrades on the merits or demerits of Mass Attack Propaganda Technique.

W.H. (Bournemouth)

THE BALLOT AND COMRADE CANTER

The title: "The Ballot v. Comrade Canter" seems to indicate that Comrade Canter is in opposition to the ballot. Such a title is unfounded and unfair, since he has never repudiated or denounced the ballot. The articles in FORUM (February and March) ignore the salient points that Comrade Canter was making in the October and November issues. It would be difficult to recognise Canter's attitude from reading the replies by Comrades H. (Harmo) Morrison, S.F. and G.G.

The basis of Comrade Canter's analysis is that the socialist revolution is inherently majority, conscious and political. His emphasis is on the *conscious majority* character of the socialist victory. This is what he stresses as the acid test of the socialist position. The "ballot" is not that test, but a mechanism employed by the socialist majority. The socialist principle is CONSCIOUS MAJORITY action (not ballot). This is what is being lost sight of in this controversy.

In his article, Comrade Canter has made clear that in his discussion concerning the ballot he is dealing with the "existing ballot machinery." In his definition of the ballot, he went out of his way to point out "... and by ballot we do not mean a vote, but the ballot as existing under the present economic system." (My emphasis.) It is to "legalisms" and "constitutionalism", as such, that Canter is referring. The socialist concern should not be with "legalism", per se. Comrade Morrison is well aware that the socialist majority is not deterred by constitutional obstacles, as he, himself, asks whether anyone thinks that "a revolutionary working class will have any more respect for the capitalists' Constitution than they have themselves."

The ballot (meaning the vote) may take on many forms. What specific forms it takes will be determined by the particular circumstances existing at the time. We cannot tell history what special measures it must take in the future. What Comrade Canter takes issue with is telling the as-yet non-existing conscious socialist majority, now, what it must do. How does anyone know, in advance, the detailed measures of the future? This much is sure, a socialist majority will know what to do and will do what it finds to be necessary.

The following are but speculations as to what forms the ballot may take: Gallup Polls, Wildfire fervour spreading rapidly, marching feet, general strike by socialists, boycotting elections because of special circumstance—who knows? None of these are essential or integral to socialist principles, but are merely illustrative of possible forms that may be assumed by the ballot. History answers this question, not us.

After the fashion of a third degree, pressure is put on to compel the use of crystal balls, and the *crucial* question is asked: "Supposing the majority are compelled to use violence?" How are you supposed to answer that question? One answer might be: "Then, that is the step that is taken." Should some strange quirk of peculiar, unforeseeable events compel the socialist majority to utilize violence, how can we, in advance, say "No!"? However, this much we can say, in advance—the majority has no need for violence.

Suffice it to say that socialists are opposed to violence and its advocacy. What is manifestly unwarranted is the charge that results from the reply to the above question: "Ha!

Ha! See. We have members in the Party who believe in violence and minority action."

W.S.P. ON THE ISSUE

In the 1951 W.S.P. Conference held in Detroit, the following motion, that stirred up a hornet's nest, was carried:

"Under capitalism, where the State machinery is in the hands of the capitalist class, the ballot can be used for the purpose of measuring the developing socialist consciousness of the working class. When this consciousness reaches a majority stage, the ballot can become the revolutionary weapon for the introduction of socialism. If, at the time the socialist majority is obtained, material conditions preclude the use of the ballot, then this majority will use whatever other means are at hand to introduce socialism."

It is not correct that the Party membership views "Comrade Canter's" stand as a violation of socialist principles. This can be seen from the three relevant referenda on this issue passed after the 1952 Conference held in Boston a year later.

1. A Party referendum endorsed the "Introducing the World Socialist Party" leaflet. It contains the following statement: "The World Socialist Party holds that *the ballot ... presents the most practical and possible way for the workers to obtain political power.* However, as a minority party, the World Socialist Party does not, nor should not, lay down the exact steps by which the majority once it becomes socialist, will introduce socialism." (emphasis mine.)

2. A Party referendum endorsed the following statement: "The W.S.P. advocates use of ballot to obtain socialism, but does not preclude any other *democratic means used by the conscious majority* at the time of the revolution." (emphasis mine.)

3. A Party referendum endorsed the following statement: "We advocate use of the ballot as a means of obtaining socialism, and anyone who advocates violence as the means to achieve the socialist victory cannot be a member of the World Socialist Party."

Thus we see that Canter has not been misrepresenting the W.S.P. position. It takes some stretching of the imagination to interpret these passed referenda motions as being minority, violence, Trotskyite or anti-Socialist Companion Parties' views.

It is quite significant that after receiving the 1951 and 1952 W.S.P. Conference Reports and the "Introducing the World Socialist Party" leaflet, not a single member of a companion party or any of the companion parties felt the urge to raise questions about the "anti-socialist" developments in the W.S.P. There was no avalanche of protests.

Even though the various companion parties of socialism are autonomous, can you remotely imagine there being any silence if the W.S.P. had appeared to make a basic change in their socialist principles? Fancy, if the W.S.P. started advocating reforms, nationalisation, united front, labour (union) political action, great leaders, etc., what a barrage of letters would have swamped us!

It was not until letters were sent abroad by some W.S.P. members voicing their apprehensions, that we received any expressions of disagreements from some comrades in companion parties. I am quite sure that I, myself, would have reacted against the alleged Canter views if I saw them presented in the manner they were in the letters. I am fully aware that the comrades writing abroad were seriously concerned because of their fears and thus, unwittingly, were slanting their emphases in such a way that the wrong impression was created. In fact, it is wrong to refer to "Canter's views" as though the referenda of the W.S.P. did not support his views.

One thing stands out. No socialist should have any qualms concerning "Canter's views" read in their context and on their own merits.

THE CRITICISMS OF "CANTER'S VIEWS"

It is perfectly understandable that comrades become concerned when they believe that the scientific socialist organisation is in danger of transforming itself into a non- or anti-socialist party. The critics of Canter fear that Canter's stand may be construed as supporting minority and violence actions.

It will be observed that the case against Canter is largely based either on inferences drawn from his statements or interpretations of his views. This attitude on "Canter's views" is based on the fallacy of refusing to deal with Canter's points but, instead, to reason

from fears and implications. Though these fears are sincere, they are unfounded.

To illustrate the matter: Canter's case revolves around limitation of approaching the ballot question as a rigid, mechanical, "existing ballot machinery" problem. The \$64 question: "What alternative is there to the ballot?" arises from ignoring his plea to examine this ballot question as part of the process of the socialist victory. If the critics looked at this problem (dialectically and materialistically) as being in a state of flux, this question would lose its meaning. However, the question would be pertinent in dealing with advocates of violence or minority action, but has no application to Canter, whose stand as outlined above is never dealt with.

It is not Comrade Canter's fault that he raised technical questions concerning differences between the British Parliament and the U.S. Congress. The "literal" and "mechanical" approach to the ballot leads to just such "problems". I am well aware that Canter's critics are not really concerned about such technical "difficulties". In their replies they recognise the essential and fundamental thing is the conscious majority. After all, this is the basic principle.

No wonder that S.F. and G.G. (March FORUM) lay such stress on "unsupple facts". There never was an unsupple fact. As socialists, we see things in motion. It is a fallacy to look on ballot as a "fact" instead of as the resolute determination of a socialist majority. This also may explain the dependence of the critics upon quotes and references for their views.

Talk of alternative forms of ballot can only be grasped by these critics as opposition to ballot. The alternatives are NOT either ballot or violence and minority—they are various forms of ballot (vote).

When I project myself into the growing socialist movement, I get a different picture than Canter. His may prove correct and mine prove wrong—but there is no quarrel among socialist that the process is conscious-socialist-majority-political in nature. For example, as distinguished from Canter, I do not visualise the capitalist state removing a significant socialist movement off the ballot; I do not think that capitalist control of state machinery can ignore a growing sentiment. I believe all sorts of concessions will be made to powerful socialist convictions. I anticipate that a 20% socialist electorate calls for far different behaviour by the capitalists than the current .0001%. (I can even conceive—but do not expect—a historic situation developing by which the Republicans or Tories might become the actual mechanism for introducing socialism.) Confronted with a socialist majority, I can only visualise the ruling class submitting to the inevitable. Is my speculation socialist and Canter's anti-socialist, or is it the reverse? Isn't it just as likely that neither is the criterion of being a socialist?

All kinds of inferences can be drawn from almost any statement. An analysis is not re-

pudiated because of possible inferences. To call Canter's and Trotskyist views similar on basis of a quote from the Trotskyist pamphlet, "In Defence of Socialism", is a case of pseudologic. On such reasoning, Comrade Morrison's views could be called similar to those of the same pamphlet, as he himself quotes favourably from it. Actually, in this whole issue, it appears that the rigidity and mechanical nature of their ballot stand causes the critics to be quite metaphysical.

Canter's position cannot be confused with the Trotskyites by any stretch of the imagination. His crystal-clear analysis of the vanguard concept, of the capitalist nature of the Soviet Union, of the immediate demand programmes, etc., demonstrate the inaccuracy of that charge. The articles signed by the pen-name "Karl Frederick" in the Western Socialist repudiate any such accusation.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a reason why neither the Declaration of Principles nor the W.S.P. Application for Membership blank have never contained any specific statement or question on the "ballot". They refer to many items, such as: class struggle, emancipation, organise consciously and politically, leadership, religion, Russia, etc. These two Party forms are basic generalisations. They constitute our general view of the historic scene and historic process.

Our major emphases are on the processes and not on mechanisms and details. The ballot is a correct and sound symbol of our whole case. The ballot symbolises the conscious, majority political nature of the socialist revolution. If viewed scientifically, it reveals the democratic nature of the socialist victory.

Again, let us stress that the socialist principle is conscious, majority, political action, that is the process of the socialist revolution. The ballot (by itself) is not a principle but merely a mechanical device. If we consider the ballot, per se, as a socialist principle, we become essentially sectarian rather than scientific.

We have always refused to be too specific concerning future details and developments. Whilst we speculate on the future, we stress the general nature of future growth and change. We have always pointed out that there need be no fears about what a socialist conscious majority will do. They will take those steps they find necessary, not what we tell them to do.

In spite of all the fuss and fury, there is really no fundamental quarrel. All concerned in this controversy (Canter, Morrison, S.F., G.G., etc.) agree on the fundamental characteristic of the socialist revolution as being conscious, majority and political. *This is what marks us off from all other alleged socialist organisations.*

The vital thing is THE REVOLUTIONARY, SCIENTIFIC, SOCIALIST VIEWPOINT we all have in common. This is the binding force that welds us into a cohesive integrated whole.

I RAB.

RAB IN WONDERLAND

With Comrade Rab's contribution to the Ballot controversy, we now have not only Comrade Canter's erroneous views on the subject of the weapon of emancipation—we also have Comrade Rab's erroneous views on Comrade Canter's erroneous views. Perhaps the most amusing aspect of Comrade Rab's defence of Canter is that everyone concerned (including Canter) regards the controversy as a "fundamental quarrel"—everyone, that is, with the exception of Rab, who is the only one with sufficient understanding of what goes on in the minds of those, including this writer, who are engaged in the controversy, to recognise that there are "no fundamental" differences! Let us look briefly at some of Rab's points.

The ballot, he contends, is not the acid test of the socialist position. The ballot is "but a mechanism employed by the socialist majority. The socialist principle is conscious majority action (not ballot)."

As an answer to my challenge ('third degree' he calls it) to come forward with some alternative means that a "conscious majority" can use to attain control and introduce socialism, Comrade Rab proposes such expedients as: "Gallup Polls, Wildfire fervour spreading rapidly, marching feet, general strike by socialists, boycotting elections because of some special circumstance," and comments on this "who knows? None of these are essential or integral to socialist principles but are merely illustrative of possible forms that may be assumed by the ballot. History answers the questions, not us."

To one who has known Comrade Rab and his views personally for even the period I have—about 14 years—this type of reasoning on his part must come as somewhat of a shock. For, to my mind, the best answers to this sort of drivel when thrown at us by our opposition used to come from this same Comrade Rab, who now appears to be "unshackled" from the traditional socialist attitude on such questions.

I deny most vehemently that I am tradition-bound over anything, but nevertheless must ask Rab this pertinent question: Do you now think you were wrong in the days when you handled our opposition—from-without in the manner you now contend is unsound? Or perhaps you feel that you were right when you were wrong then, while we are wrong now in thinking we are as right now as we and you were then. No matter how one looks at it, this doesn't make sense—no more than does your defence of Comrade Canter's views on the Ballot. I agree that "thinking is no violation of socialist discipline," but is your reasoning really *thinking*?

Look at your alternatives, Comrade. Supposing it were possible to determine by means

of a Gallup Poll (something I do not agree upon) that we have a genuine majority of genuine socialists in society. How can such a Poll provide the means whereby this majority can seize control of the state? There are certain definite jobs to be done. How do they get done? How can "wildfire fervour" put socialist representatives into control of the state machinery without utilising the "existing apparatus", at least that part of it which is the real means of determining the desires of the population? Does the comrade really believe that he or anyone else can know whether "marching feet" are to be found on the opposite extremity from socialist heads? And why should a majority of socialists want to go on a "general strike"? The object of socialist revolution is not to see which class can outlast the other in a strike crisis. Or is it? And since when do socialists "boycott" elections under any circumstances? When a socialist has no other opportunity to register his vote he still votes by marking "socialism" across his ballot, or by any other means he can employ to demonstrate that he will not be satisfied with anything short of socialism. Protest votes such as this are noticed too, when there are enough of them, and have been from time to time commented upon by the press.

Let us now briefly take up an excellent piece of twisting on the part of Comrade Rab. Under the sub-heading: *W.S.P. on the ISSUE* he sets down four quotations which are supposed, according to him, to prove that Comrade Canter's views are not in any way contrary to those of the party. The first one, the motion drawn up at the 1951 Conference, was treated in a subsequent Party Referendum, but Rab, like Canter, neglected to mention this fact. Perhaps he forgot.

The second quotation under this heading (numbered 1) was also voted down in the same Referendum, yet the N.A.C., against the wishes of the Party membership, continued to distribute the leaflet which contained the (at that time) objectionable statement. On the occasion of the Referendum following the 1952 Conference, the distribution of the leaflet was sanctioned, although it would have been useless to vote otherwise, since it had already been widely circulated for one to two years.

On the question of the comrade's next two quotations there hangs an ever stranger tale—one which he also forgets to mention. No 3 was the original motion drawn up and offered at the 1952 Conference. One of those most bitterly opposed was Comrade Canter, who stated openly at the session that he would resign from the Party if this motion were passed; and that were the majority of the workers to resort to violence, he would support it to the hilt and consider it to be democratic activity (see Conference Minutes). Through a parliamentary trick which went unobserved

by the chair and unchallenged from the floor, quotation number 3 was offered as a substitute motion and passed. It was subsequently approved by the Party Referendum.

Comrade Rab's final quotation was submitted as a separate referendum and passed with only 3 voting against, but it was worded slightly different than in Comrade Rab's article—a difference which make ALL the difference. Instead of appearing as "... use of the ballot as a means . . .", it read "... use of the ballot as *the* means . . ." This was probably another slip of Comrade Rab's memory, but whether slip or not, it is good to keep both the comrade and the record straight on the subject.

THE TROTZKYITE POSITION

I do not intend to spend any further time in answering Comrade Rab's "answer" to my article on the Canter viewpoint. This has been adequately covered. Anyone who wishes to know the Canter position has but to read it in FORUM. It speaks for itself. I would, however, like to correct a statement by Comrade Rab concerning a "favourable reference" by me to the Trotskyite position in my FORUM article. If the comrade will re-read the section in question, he will see that he is wrong. I merely stated that the position on the *prevention* of the use of violence by the capitalists, as laid down by Albert Goldman in the pamphlet "In Defence of Socialism" was more favourable than Comrade Canter's views on the matter. I did not say it was the socialist position, as Goldman did not insist on the need for organised *Socialists* in a strength sufficient to discourage its use. A majority of the groups that Trotskyites seek to organise do not necessarily have to be socialists and generally speaking are not.

Nor did I maintain that Comrade Canter belongs with the Trotskyites, even though I did state, and documented it, that his views on this subject were definitely those of the Trotskyites. Such reasoning is also shared by the Third Internationalists and many other small groups. My point was (and I still insist that it is so) that we have a minority of members within the Party whose views do not correspond with ours, and this has been mainly due to a past laxity in some cases on membership requirements and that the situation is one to regret and to guard against in the future.

One more parting salvo. On the question of the possibility of the socialist revolution being accompanied by the use of violence Comrade Rab asks:

"Should some strange quirk of peculiar, unforeseeable events compel the socialist majority to utilize violence, how can we, in advance, say: 'No!?'"

He follows this by:

"However, this much we can say, in advance—the majority has no need for violence."

This attitude almost reminds us of the viewpoint expressed by certain advocates of "preparedness" on the question of a life in the hereafter. "We are fairly certain," they reason, "that there is no God, but just in case we may be wrong we are going to take no chances of eternal punishment. We will not deny the possibility of God's existence."

As for me (and, I am certain, the overwhelming majority of scientific socialists) I have no need for any such "preparedness" either on the question of God, or as is the case

with Comrade Rab, on the subject of violent (socialist) revolution. The onward surge of history which has destroyed the need for a belief in a supernatural power has, at the same time and to the same extent, destroyed both the need and the possibility of a violent socialist revolution.

H. MORRISON.

Since these articles were received, the following "final word" has been received from Comrade Rab (Editors).

Comrade Morrison is correct on one item. I did err in copying the 3d. W.S.P. referendum

in my article, "Comrade Canter AND the Ballot." This referendum did deal with the ballot as THE means and not as "a" means. It was an inadvertent, honest mistake and was certainly unintentional.

However, in no way does it affect the theme of my article, which pointed out that the revolutionary alternative is NOT between the ballot and some other means of obtaining socialism, but that there may be alternate forms that the ballot assumes when utilized by the socialist majority. The error some comrades make is to interpret speculations on future possibilities as being opposition to the ballot

I. RAB

LOGIC, TRUTH AND SOCIALISM

One of the fields covered by logic is that of truth. According to formal logic, propositions may either be true or false, and must be either true or false. It is therefore called a two-valued logic, because any proposition can only have the value 1 (truth) or 0 (falsity). This is the type of logic used in electronic calculating machines, and is obviously quite capable of dealing quite well with the sort of world such machines have to understand. It is the world of the "either-or".

We can get a little nearer to the real world, however, by the use of a three-valued logic. Such propositions as "There are living things on Mars", for example, would be given a value of $\frac{1}{2}$ in this logic, as would the propositions "I shall get up at about 7.30 to-morrow morning", or "This stranger is honest".

A four-valued logic has also been attempted, but introduces too many complexities to be shortly explained. The next real resting point is a multi-valued logic.

This is statistical in its outlook, and treats logic empirically. Thus the truth of the statement "This card which I have picked from an ordinary pack of cards belongs to a red suit" has a value, before the card is inspected, of 0.5. Under similar circumstances, the statement "This card is a King" has a truth value of 0.076923.

Further than this it is difficult to go, in the direction of exact and objective delineation of truth. And yet even this much is pitifully inadequate for handling the events of the real world.

DIALECTICAL LOGIC

In the real world, things are never just true or simply false. Their truth value is contingent on circumstances. Thus I sit in my room with the door closed, and write "The proposition that the door is shut has the value 1". But my enemy who pumps poison gas through the cracks disproves my point and kills me in the process. Such mistakes are dangerous.

While the statement would be true for cats and dogs, it would be false for gases or liquids, and only partly true for light, which can get

in at the lower edge of the door, and also through the keyhole

Any logic, then which attempts to be purely objective, with no trace of subjective elements such as purposes, and attempts to deal with things "as they really are in themselves" must fall to the ground. All the types of logic we have mentioned so far suffer from this defect, though some try to escape from it by quite elaborate means.

The only type of logic which can deal with the real world is dialectical logic. What does this have to say about truth, then? IT SAYS THAT IF A STATEMENT IS TRUE, THEN IT MUST BE FALSE. This is only to say, in a rather dramatic form, that any statement is only true within limits. Take away those limits, and it becomes false.

Now, in real life the limits are environmental circumstances. For example, 2 plus 2 equals four is only true in day-to-day existence when certain environmental conditions are left out of the question. Two rabbits plus two rabbits equals four rabbits. But given time, the answer is somewhat different—perhaps 22 rabbits. Two sacks of wheat plus two sacks of wheat equals four sacks of wheat. But given time, the sacks rot, the mice get in, and the wheat goes musty—the answer is perhaps 0 sacks of wheat. Or pouring water into a 3-gallon bucket—two gallons plus two gallons equals three gallons. Or joining two telephone wires together—2 decibels plus 2 decibels equals 2.301 decibels!

We know that environmental conditions are changing and evolving all the time, without ever reaching any permanent state of rest. Therefore the limits of any statement are also changing. And therefore the truth of any statement is changing, too.

Not only subjectively, then, must absolute truth be denied, but objectively as well. The statement that MY WINDOW IS OPEN is not only (subjectively) true for a bluebottle and (subjectively) false for a cart-horse, but

also (objectively) more or less true depending on the season of the year, because the wood warps in the summer and it won't open so wide.

THE SYLLOGISM

Having seen so much, let us go back to our old friend the syllogism, raised from its dusty bed by Horatio (FORUM, March issue).

Study of the syllogism is really of very little use to socialists; almost the only use for it is in naming obvious fallacies in the arguments of one's opponents, and it really doesn't cut much ice with them when one does us it in that way.

For example, Horatio says: "The Socialist Party's claim that the road to Socialism is through Parliament is such a valid hypothesis. It follows rigorously from the major premiss that Socialism is democratic; minor premiss, democracy operates through Parliament; conclusion, therefore Socialism is Parliamentary." Now one can dismiss this, if one has studied the syllogism, by naming it as an example of the fallacy of the undistributed middle. But it is equally good logically, and far more effective, to construct an exactly similar syllogism with different terms, to show its absurdity. Thus, in this case: "Horatio is a member of the S.P.G.B. Members of the S.P.G.B. have died in the past. Therefore, Horatio has died in the past."

Or again, when Horatio says: "Tories and Labour are bad. Liberals are not Tory or Labour. Therefore, Vote Liberal; It is Good." (His comment on this is: "We see, therefore, that thinkers can draw opposing conclusions from the same accepted premisses.") We can simply retort with this: "Turner and Wilmott are alive. Horatio is not Turner or Wilmott. Therefore, Bury Horatio; He is Dead."

The study of dialectics, on the other hand, is full of use for socialists, since it is a valuable weapon in the struggle against fixed ways of thought and outdated metaphysical argument.

J. C. ROWAN.